



Department of Justice

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ELEVEN DEFENDANTS INDICTED ON DOMESTIC TERRORISM CHARGES

*Group Allegedly Responsible for Series of Arsons in Western States,
Acting on Behalf of Extremist Movements*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Eleven defendants have been indicted on charges including arson and destruction of an energy facility for allegedly participating in a campaign of domestic terrorism in five western states on behalf of the extremist Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) movements, the Justice Department announced today.

The 65-count indictment, returned by a federal grand jury in Eugene, Ore., Thursday, alleges that the defendants committed acts of domestic terrorism in Oregon, Wyoming, Washington, California, and Colorado from 1996 through 2001. Specifically, the indictment includes the charges of conspiracy to commit arson; conspiracy; arson; attempted arson; use and possession of a destructive device; and destruction of an energy facility.

Eight defendants were arrested prior to the indictment and three are believed to be outside the United States.

The indictment alleges that the group committed arsons with improvised incendiary devices made from milk jugs, petroleum products and homemade timers in a series of attacks in the five states. The targets of these attacks included U.S. Forest Service ranger stations, Bureau of Land Management wild horse facilities, meat processing companies, lumber companies, a high-tension power line, and a ski facility in Colorado. The indictment alleges that the group claimed to be acting on behalf of ALF and ELF.

“The trail of destruction left by these defendants across the western United States caused millions of dollars in damage to public and private facilities,” said Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales. “Today’s indictment proves that we will not tolerate any group that terrorizes the American people, no matter its intentions or objectives.”

“Investigating and preventing animal rights and environmental extremism is one of the FBI’s highest domestic terrorism priorities,” said FBI Director Robert Mueller. “We are committed to working with our partners to disrupt and dismantle these movements, to protect our fellow citizens, and to bring to justice those who commit crime and terrorism in the name of animal rights or environmental issues.”

“To those who use arson and explosives to threaten lives and destroy property, ATF will continue to dedicate all of our expertise to solve these crimes,” said ATF Director Carl J. Truscott. “We will work relentlessly with our law enforcement partners to find you and bring you to justice.”

According to the indictment, Joseph Dibee, Chelsea Dawn Gerlach, Sarah Kendall Harvey, Daniel Gerard McGowan, Stanislas Gregory Meyerhoff, Josephine Sunshine Overaker, Jonathan Mark Christopher Paul, Rebecca Rubin, Suzanne Savoie, Darren Todd Thurston, and Kevin M. Tubbs conspired to commit numerous acts of domestic terrorism as part of a group they called "the Family," an alleged group of the extremist movements ALF and ELF.

The indictment follows a series of arrests on Dec. 7, 2005, in Oregon, Arizona, New York, and Virginia. Gerlach, Harvey, Meyerhoff, McGowan, Thurston, and Tubbs were arrested at that time for various charges, including the destruction of an energy facility. Paul was arrested on Jan. 17, 2006, on a criminal complaint charging him with one of the arsons mentioned in the indictment. Savoie was arrested on Jan. 19, 2006, on a criminal complaint. Dibee, Overaker and Rubin are believed to be outside of the United States.

The indictment refers to attacks on 17 sites:

- Oct. 28, 1996, at the U.S. Forest Service Detroit Ranger Station in Marion County, Ore.;
- Oct. 30, 1998, at the U.S. Forest Service Oakridge Ranger Station in Lane County, Ore.;
- July 21, 1997, at the Cavel West, Inc. meat packing company in Deschutes County, Ore.;
- Nov. 30, 1997, at the U.S. Bureau of Land Management Wild Horse and Burro Facility in Harney County, Ore.;
- June 21, 1997, at the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Wildlife Facility in Olympia, Wash.;
- Oct. 11, 1998, at the U.S. Bureau of Land Management Wild Horse Holding Facility in Rock Springs, Wyo.;
- Oct. 19, 1998, at the Vail Ski Facility in Vail, Colo.;
- Dec. 27, 1998, at U.S. Forest Industries in Jackson County, Ore.;
- May 9, 1999, at Childers Meat Company in Lane County, Ore.;
- Dec. 25, 1999, at the Boise Cascade office in Polk County, Ore.;
- Dec. 30, 1999, at a Bonneville Power Administration high-tension power line tower near Bend, Ore.;
- Sept. 6, 2000, at the Eugene Police Department West University Public Safety Station in Eugene, Ore.;
- Jan. 2, 2001, at the Superior Lumber Company in Douglas County, Ore.;
- March 30, 2001, at Joe Romania Chevrolet Truck Center in Eugene, Ore.;
- May 21, 2001, at Jefferson Poplar Farms in Columbia County, Ore.;
- May 21, 2001, at the University of Washington Horticultural Center in Seattle; and
- Oct. 15, 2001, at the U.S. Bureau of Land Management Wild Horse Facility in Litchfield, Calif.

An indictment is not evidence of guilt. The defendants named in this indictment are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The cases are being prosecuted by the office of the U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon. The cases are being investigated by the FBI and ATF, along with the Eugene Police Department, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Oregon State Police, Portland Police Bureau, Oregon Department of Justice, and the Lane County Sheriff's Office.

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